

CANDICE S. MILLER
10TH DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
228 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2106
FAX: (202) 226-1169

DISTRICT OFFICE:
48701 VAN DYKE AVENUE
SHELBY TOWNSHIP, MI 48317
(586) 997-5010
FAX: (586) 997-5013



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2210

August 24, 2010

COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT

RAILROADS, PIPELINES,
AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

WATER RESOURCES
AND ENVIRONMENT

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY

BORDER, MARITIME,
AND GLOBAL COUNTERTERRORISM

TRANSPORTATION SECURITY
AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND
GLOBAL WARMING

The Honorable James Oberstar
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Oberstar:

Following up to my letter on August 3rd concerning the hearing scheduled for September 15, 2010 focused on the Enbridge oil spill of July 25, 2010 in Marshall Michigan, I ask again that we expand the scope of that hearing to examine other critical issues associated with this Enbridge pipeline that also travels through my district. Since the incident in Marshall I have been communicating with Enbridge and regulators and have found some issues of great concern to me and my constituents. In a communication I received from Enbridge on August 20th I was informed of a problem in the pipeline at mile post 751, about 300 feet from the west shore of the St. Clair River buried in the riverbed under 30 feet of water. This anomaly is a dent on the top of the pipeline, measuring 6.89 by 12.05 inches long which was discovered by Enbridge in August 2009.

Enbridge was made aware of this issue as a result of an in-line inspection and has subsequently informed the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). After Enbridge discovered this problem it chose to operate the pipeline at a reduced pressure level pending a more permanent solution, and on July 17th Enbridge requested from PHMSA the ability to operate Line 6B at that lower pressure for an additional two and one half years.

Due to the difficulties in accessing the site, Enbridge has yet to thoroughly develop a long-term remediation plan for this section of pipeline. While Enbridge has given assurances that the issue under the St. Clair River is being handled appropriately, given the fact that this line has ruptured already in Marshall combined with the incident in Clearbrook, Minnesota in November 2007 where two workers were killed when a pipeline exploded following insufficient repairs for which Enbridge was recently fined \$2.5 million for violations of safety regulations, I believe Congress must provide sufficient oversight so that Enbridge and the regulators understand that we will not accept a tragic incident under the St. Clair River.

A bursting of the pipeline under the St. Clair River would be simply catastrophic. The St. Clair River is home to seven water in-take pipes of the Detroit water system that serves millions of people in Southeast Michigan. The river also flows into Lake St. Clair and on to the Detroit River and Lake Erie where many other water in-take pipes for our water system are located. The river is a narrow artery between Lake Huron, Lake St. Clair and the lower Great Lakes. It has a swift moving current which would make any spill very difficult to contain. We were fortunate in the Marshall incident that the spill did not reach the Great Lakes, but if a similar incident were to happen under the St. Clair River we would not be so fortunate.

An incident at this critical location would not only negatively affect our drinking water supply, but our economy as well. The St. Clair River and Lake St. Clair represent the busiest shipping lanes on the Great Lakes carrying trade up and down the lakes. A halt to this shipping in this area would have a terrible impact on any number of industries that rely on this trade. Avoidance of a terrible incident at this critical location must be given the highest possible priority.

It has become very clear that the Deepwater Horizon tragedy in the Gulf of Mexico was a result of a far too cozy relationship between the company and the regulators which allowed the project to go forward despite very serious flaws. While I am not suggesting such a relationship in this case, it is the clear duty of the Congress to perform vigorous oversight to ensure that both the company and the regulators are taking every appropriate action to maintain the safety of pipelines that travel through our nation. It is my responsibility to carry out my oversight responsibilities by asking very pointed questions concerning the issue in Line 6B under the St. Clair River at our hearing on September 15th of both Enbridge and the regulators. I am asking that you make this issue an official item on the agenda so that both the Enbridge representatives and the PHMSA can be properly prepared to answer these questions.

I thank you very much for scheduling this important hearing and your thoughtful consideration of my request. I look forward to continue working with you and all of our colleagues on the Committee on our vital work to ensure the safety of the pipeline system in our country.

Sincerely,



Candice S. Miller
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable John Mica
Ranking Member, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

The Honorable Corrine Brown
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials